



## WORLD HEALTH DAY 2022

### SOUTH SUDAN RECOMMITS TO ENHANCING EFFORTS TO IMPROVE CLIMATE CHANGE-INDUCED HEALTH THREATS INCLUDING FLOODING

World Health Day is observed annually on 7 April, to commemorate the anniversary of the founding of the World Health Organization (WHO).

This year's event is marked under the theme **"Our Planet, Our Health,"** and is aimed to raise awareness of the inextricable link between the planet and our health, as the burden of non-communicable and infectious diseases rises alongside the growing incidence of climate-related challenges.

Climate change is manifesting in increasing temperature, rising sea levels, changing rainfall patterns, and more frequent and severe extreme weather conditions such as flooding. The WHO estimates that more than 13 million annual deaths globally are due to avoidable environmental causes, including the climate crisis.

"The recent flooding witnessed in many parts of the country and extreme weather are examples of the effect of climate change. These have facilitated mosquitos to spread malaria further and fast than ever before. Malaria thus, remains the leading cause of illness and death and morbidity in South Sudan", said Dr Victoria Anib Majur, the Undersecretary at the Ministry of Health South Sudan in a press release issued on the World Health Day event on 7 April 2022.

These new realities have inflicted profound health threats including diseases outbreaks that have caused needless illness and death.

Since July 2020, South Sudan has been experiencing heavy rainfall and rising water levels along the White Nile, which resulted in massive flooding in many parts of the country affecting nearly one million people and subsequently resulting in widespread disruption to normal patterns of life in the affected locations.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- South Sudanese battle record floods amid rapidly changing climate (PG. 2)
- UNICEF and Education partners launch campaign to boost teaching and quality education (PG. 3)
- WFP's retail in a box initiative boosts local economy (PG. 4)
- News from UNAFPs (PG. 5)



In 2022, The Ministry of Health with support from WHO and partners conducted two rounds of oral cholera vaccination in Rubkona and Bentiu Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camp in Unity State protecting almost 200000 people.

WHO will continue to do its utmost best in supporting the Ministry of Health to address these challenges,” said Dr Fabian Ndenzako, WHO Representative a.i. for South Sudan. Strengthening multi-stakeholder engagement and collaboration to ensure alignment of efforts to fight climate change should be placed high on the agenda”.

With direct consequences for the key determinants of health, climate change is negatively impacting air and water quality, food security, human habitat and shelter. Consequently, the burden of heart and lung disease, stroke, and cancer, among others, is growing in Africa and the world at large.

Like many countries in the African Region, South Sudan also faces water and sanitation scarcity whether in health facilities or communities. Water-borne diseases such as hepatitis E virus and diarrheal diseases are on the rise, especially in most affected areas of Unity, Upper Nile, and Jonglei states.

The Ministry of Health calls upon all stakeholders to act on the social and economic determinants of climate change and health, by working across sectors to improve living and working conditions, and access to education, particularly for the most marginalized groups, ensuring the continued delivery of essential healthcare services.

The Ministry of Health also calls for joint action by legislators and policymakers to combat tobacco and its effects on the environment and human health.

## **SOUTH SUDAN MARKS ONE YEAR OF COVID-19 VACCINATION, OVER 500000 PEOPLE RECEIVED FULL DOSE**

One year ago on 25 March 2021, South Sudan received its first COVID-19 doses from the COVAX Facility and launched vaccinations on 6 April 2021 with these donations. To date, over 500000 people have been fully vaccinated and efforts are ongoing to increase vaccine uptake to reach a wider proportion of the population.

Since the first shipments, the country received 1.1 million COVID-19 vaccine doses, all from the COVAX Facility. Of these, 584 463 doses have been administered and 3.6% of the total population has been fully vaccinated.

The major challenge South Sudan has faced since the first vaccines arrived, was the lack of operational funding to implement the COVID-19 vaccination program.

Through extensive coordination with key NGO partners, and effective advocacy with in-country donors, the vaccination was expanded. COVID-19 vaccination is currently conducted in 579 health facilities in all 80 counties. Insecurity and flooding are impeding access to many parts of South Sudan, increasing the cost of reaching remote populations with health care delivery, including vaccination.

“Despite the major challenges with vaccine supplies at the beginning, South Sudan Ministry of Health and partners have made great efforts to increase the vaccine uptake, including expanding vaccination sites, ensuring effective use of available stocks, mobilizing communities and addressing doubts and misinformation,” said Dr Fabian Ndenzako, WHO Representative a.i. in South Sudan.

“WHO congratulates South Sudan on getting this far and will continue to support the government and its partners to achieve its goals.”

To increase demand, South Sudan is emphasizing its efforts on integrating COVID-19 vaccination in routine immunization, as well as through the implementation of accelerated vaccination activities in prioritized States.

During the pilot phase of the accelerated vaccination activity, almost 70,000 people were fully vaccinated in one week, significantly increasing the monthly utilization rate for COVID-19 vaccines.

WHO continues to support the country to scale up COVID-19 vaccine uptake, which will hopefully limit the emergence of variants, as well as stepping up surveillance, genome sequencing capacity, increasing testing to facilitate early detection and response to cluster of cases. WHO is also continuing to support the efforts to adhere to public health and social measures until the pandemic is controlled.

Read more: <https://www.afro.who.int/countries/south-sudan/news/south-sudan-marks-one-year-covid-19-vaccination-over-500-000-people-received-full-dose?country=876&name=South%20Sudan>



## UNICEF AND EDUCATION PARTNERS LAUNCH CAMPAIGN TO BOOST TEACHING AND QUALITY OF EDUCATION



Teachers and students are glad to be back at school on the first day of the new school year. Photo Credit: UNICEF

As schools across South Sudan prepared to reopen in early May, the Ministry of General Education and Instruction (MoGE&I) and partners including European Union (EU), African Development Bank (AfDB), the Global Programme for Education (GPE) and UNICEF are advocating for the crucial role of teachers in ensuring quality education for children.

In a month-long campaign titled ***Teaching is not just my job – it's my passion***, UNICEF and partners are focusing on teachers in South Sudan who love their job and take joy in teaching, nurturing and developing their students.

The objective of the campaign is to raise awareness and advocate for quality education and demonstrate that teachers in South Sudan are the backbone of the education sector. It aims to inspire all dedicated teachers, often working on a voluntary basis, and motivate a new generation of learners – even beyond the classroom.

Teaching is one of the least paid jobs in South Sudan. Due to inflation, salaries have become unstable. The impacts of Covid-19 have worsened the challenges for teachers, as most teachers have not received their salaries for some time. Without teachers to support schools to re-open, further learning losses may be experienced, with more school dropouts in 2022.

The multimedia campaign includes billboards, videos, and public service announcements. Radio programmes on Radio Miraya will highlight the achievements and challenges, and UNICEF will feature stories from teachers and children on its websites and social media.

The campaign also focuses on how teachers can act as mentors to motivate children to remain in school. Female teachers, particularly in rural areas, are role models for girls to attend school which can protect them from child marriage and gender-based violence.

Being in school has important benefits for children beyond academic learning. Schools are safe places where they are protected from exploitation, abuse and from harmful cultural practices such as child marriage. Schools also allow children to access basic services including clean water, health and in many cases a reliable source of nutritious food.



## WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME'S RETAIL-IN-A-BOX INITIATIVE BOOSTS LOCAL ECONOMY



A WFP-backed pop-up retail outlet in the Gorom refugee camp in South Sudan. Photo Credit: WFP

Markets come in all shapes and sizes, from traditional set-ups to online farmers markets. In [South Sudan](#), the [World Food Programme](#) (WFP) has rolled out a 'retail in a box' pop-up initiative in Gorom refugee camp that is spurring on local businesses while helping refugees buy their foods of choice.

Gorom, some 21km south-west of the capital city of Juba, is home to 2,200 refugees spread across 11 villages. The camp was set up in 2011 to host refugees displaced from Ethiopia's Gambella region.

To create the new market for the refugee community, WFP installed portable storage containers in the camp, transforming the metal structures into shops and booths with proper doors, windows, ventilation and security measures – ensuring a comfortable shopping experience for the camp's residents.

Local suppliers were selected and trained by WFP on food safety and quality, cash management and customer service.

"We really like working with WFP," says Mursal Samater, one of the suppliers that WFP contracted to bring food to Gorom. "We get a steady stream of customers" – who have confidence in what they are buying.

To guarantee fair and stable prices, WFP negotiates a monthly fixed price – based on local market rates – for each commodity. WFP's field and market monitors keep tabs on the market regularly, making sure food is always available in the right quantity, variety, and quality.

The retail-in-a-box initiative has proven a big hit with the refugee community of Gorom camp – people no longer rely solely on WFP's food rations.

For Ariet, a refugee from Ethiopia, there is nothing more normal than preparing home-cooked meals for her three children: breakfast, lunch and dinner. After her circumstances changed, freedom of choice became a luxury she could no longer afford.

"I fled my own country to escape from warfare and to find safety," she says. "When I arrived here conditions were basic, and I felt as if I

was living out in the open. With time, things became more accommodating." Across from Ariet's home now stand a series of retail shops that sell a variety of foods and other essential items to serve the needs of thousands of refugees living in the camp. The newly built shops have livened up the camp, with children playing around the stalls after school.

Ariet and other refugee families can now buy food using WFP cash transfers, which offer people choice and the ability to diversify their diets at a low cost, supporting the local economy in the process.

"Before these shops were built, we used to receive monthly rations – now, I can choose what I want to buy and cook for my family and children," says Ariet.

Maize flour, rice and beans are the most popular foods that Ariet and her neighbours like to buy. Prior to this WFP initiative, refugees in this city had access to only sorghum, lentils, vegetable oil and salt.

WFP looks for innovative solutions that facilitate people's access to essential goods, while also spurring on the local market economy, kickstarting retail networks that support affected populations while giving those refugees a measure of normalcy in their lives.

Where possible, WFP provides cash instead of food assistance to empower people with the choice of buying what they want and strengthen the local economy.

"Now we have evidence that we can positively impact markets to help people have cheaper and better access to food, and we want to continue to do that across South Sudan," says David Thomas, Head of Innovation at WFP South Sudan.

This year, WFP plans to scale up the retail-in-a-box project to at least three new regions in Lakes, Warrap and Northern Bahr el Ghazal states in South Sudan. This will allow more people to receive cash from WFP and for them to choose how to prioritize their immediate needs.

With similar efforts, more parents like Ariet will be able to provide varied diets for their families, bringing a little taste of home back into their lives.



Ariet's children and friends enjoy a meal made from ingredients bought at the pop-up market. Photo Credit: WFP

## NEWS FROM UN AGENCIES, FUNDS AND PROGRAMMES

### A HEALTHIER BEGINNING: ROUTINE IMMUNIZATION IN SOUTH SUDAN TO PROTECT CHILDREN AGAINST INFECTIOUS DISEASES



Baby Emmanuel receives his routine immunization at an IOM run clinic in Malakal, South Sudan. Photo Credit: IOM

Clutching his mother's arms, baby Emmanuel Aban jerks his legs to no avail as his mother, Nyachan Aban, restrains him. He cries out as the needle pierces his skin, delivering a mixture of vaccine doses.

"Khalas Khalas!" his mother says in Arabic, to comfort him that the painful experience is over. Nyachan picks up her baby's vaccination card and walks out of the doctor's room as baby Emmanuel begins to calm down.

"I brought my baby for the third vaccination so that he will grow up healthy, without diseases," says Nyachan. "Children are always falling sick, but now that he has been vaccinated, he is protected."

"Millions of children have been protected against vaccine-preventable deadly childhood diseases because they were vaccinated," says Leku Dominic, IOM Senior Medical Assistant in Malakal. "Vaccination keeps children healthy."

Through its Routine Vaccination Programme supported by Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, IOM aids South Sudan's Expanded Immunization Programme through routine, mobile and outreach missions. These initiatives are carried out through various programmes in collaboration with the Ministries of Health and key partners such as the World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF and Gavi.

In 2021 alone, over 83,000 children were immunized by IOM and its partners through routine polio vaccination and 30,000 through routine measles vaccination in emergency and low-income contexts across the globe.

Read the story online <https://storyteller.iom.int/stories/healthier-beginning-routine-immunization-south-sudan-protect-children-against-infectious>

### UN WOMEN ORGANIZES NATIONAL SECURITY FORCES EXCHANGE VISITS TO RWANDA AND GHANA

In cooperation with the Ministry of Defense and Veteran Affairs, UN Women organized exchange visits for South Sudan People's Defense Force (SSPDF) to Rwanda from 21-25 March and Ghana from 2-9 April 2022.

The visits provided an opportunity to the participants to exchange experiences on gender responsiveness and empowerment in post-conflict situations.

The visits were also an opportunity for the SSPDF to see how regional counterparts have gender mainstreamed security sector and recruited women into the sector.

The study trips were organized as part of UN Women's ongoing support to the Security Sector Reform (SSR) in South Sudan.



Some of the participants at the National Security forces exchange visits to Rwanda and Ghana.

Photo Credit: Rwandan Defense forces

## NEWS FROM UN AGENCIES, FUNDS AND PROGRAMMES

### MINE ACTIONS IN SOUTH SUDAN

It is estimated that 18 km<sup>2</sup> of land (approximately 2,572 football pitches) in South Sudan is still contaminated by Explosive Ordnance (EO) as of today.

The threat of EO remains a major challenge to the safe movement of the population including IDPs, refugees, and returnees, and to the delivery of humanitarian and security services.

Since 2004, National Mine Action Authority (NMAA) and UNMAS with Main Action partners have addressed the threat by surveying and clearing over a million of EOs and almost five thousand kilometers of road, as well as by providing explosive ordnance risk education to almost six million people.



UNMAS mine clearance team surveying EO. Photo Credit: UNMAS/TDI



School students attending EORE session. Photo Credit: UNMAS

### UNMISS TRAINS ANIMAL HEALTH WORKERS AND HANDS OVER GAME-CHANGING VET CLINIC IN KODOK



UNMISS veterinarians treating skin infection in a sick goat. Photo Credit: UNMISS

When ailing cows in South Sudan come calling, chances are that our UNMISS veterinarians from India are already on their way.

When cattle owners in Upper Nile State's Fashoda County reported that many livestock were severely suffering from a variety of diseases, the vet team went from Malakal to Kodok, where a total of 312 animals were treated in a single day.

Apart from cows, the vets also gave sheep, goats and a solitary donkey much-needed medical care.

While in Kodok, the UNMISS cattle whisperers took the opportunity to offer community animal health workers a refresher course on basic veterinary skills as well.



Refresher training on veterinary medicines conducted by UNMISS. Photo Credit: UNMISS

## UNITED NATIONS RELEASED US\$19 MILLION TO HELP PEOPLE IN SOUTH SUDAN PREPARE FOR SEVERE FLOODING

Two OCHA-managed pooled funds have released US\$19 million to help communities in South Sudan prepare for severe flooding expected during the rainy season. The country is projected to suffer a fourth consecutive year of extreme flooding over the coming months.

The funding will go to UN agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to prepare and protect people in the Bentiu camp for internally displaced people and surrounding areas in Unity State, which are among the areas most exposed to severe flooding.

As rains in South Sudan are starting again, large swathes of land in these areas are still under water from the last rainy season. With upstream water levels still high, even limited rains could flood farmland, wash away shelters and exacerbate waterborne diseases, according to analysis by the Centre for Humanitarian Data.

In Unity State, expected flooding could put more than 320,000 people – over a third of whom are already displaced – at risk of further displacement, loss of livelihoods, disease outbreaks and food insecurity.

The South Sudan Humanitarian Fund (SSHF) and the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) have released the money before the flooding occurs to avert a humanitarian crisis. Some \$4 million of SSHF funds will enable NGOs and UN agencies to reinforce dikes around vital access roads, displaced people's homes, the airstrip, and other infrastructure.

The \$15 million CERF allocation will support people to protect their homes and key infrastructure, such as latrines and water wells, from flood water, and thus aim to avert a public health emergency.

“Three years of unprecedented flooding have devastated people's lives,” said Sara Beysolow Nyanti, Humanitarian Coordinator for South Sudan. “As the rainy season has started, this funding will enable humanitarian organizations to soften the blow of another crisis by preparing and protecting communities in Bentiu in advance.”



## SOUTH SUDANESE BATTLE RECORD FLOODS AMID RAPIDLY CHANGING CLIMATE

At first light, 70-year-old Cholul Jock slips into murky, chest-deep water and tours the fragile earthen dike ringing the two huts that are home to her family.

She tucks plastic sheets into the holes and tamps mud down into the seeping gaps in a daily struggle to keep the floodwaters at bay.

“It’s the only way I can prevent this water from entering my compound,” she explains. “And if the dike bursts, the water could sweep us all away – that’s my fear.”

The mother of 18 children – three surviving – is among thousands of residents of Fangak County in South Sudan’s eastern Jonglei state battling the worst floods in living memory.

Record rainfall in the past three years in the Upper Nile region, and flooding from upstream in other countries, have drowned the lands where they once raised goats and cultivated sorghum and ground nuts, with little chance for flood waters to recede between rainy seasons.

Flooded out twice, Jock has not farmed for the past two years. Forced to relocate, her family have retreated behind an 80-metre flood barrier with their few goats.

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“We have been fighting on two fronts for the last two years: hunger and [keeping the] water on the other side. We go to sleep hungry every day because we have no food,” she says.

According to the UN Office for Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), more than 835,000 people like Jock have been impacted by the flooding in South Sudan, an already fragile country roiled by conflicts since it gained independence from Sudan in 2011.

The floods have badly affected 33 of the landlocked nation’s 79 counties, making life ever-more precarious for those affected.

Read More: [UNHCR - South Sudanese battle record floods amid rapidly changing climate](#)



James Kai an ex-farmer displaced by floods, paddles his canoe from his home in old Fangak to the market. Photo Credit: UNHCR

